

**GLR Learning Tuesdays Webinar**  
**Following the Science Upstream:**  
**Using the EarlyBird App to Identify Children with Reading Challenges**  
**Emerging Models Webinar**

May 5, 2020

Moderator, Presenter & Commentator Bios

**Michelle Knapik, Moderator**



Michelle Knapik is the president of the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation (EHTF). EHTF funds innovative projects that advance solutions to basic and enduring problems in the fields of arts, environment, and learning differences. Key initiatives include [Artists Thr!ve](#), [Curators on the Cusp](#), [Sustainable CT](#), and an [Early Learning Ecosystem](#).

EHTF is a multi-generational, family foundation with active legacy and youth initiatives. Prior to EHTF, Michelle was the Director of the Sustainable Environments Program at the Surdna Foundation where she developed a grant and PRI making strategy to advance Next Generation Infrastructure. Previously, Michelle was the Environment Program Director at the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation where she led strategies to support sustainable community solutions.

Michelle draws on a wide range of program, policy, and organizational development experience. A lawyer by training, Michelle worked for eleven years in Philadelphia City government, including serving as the Director of Energy Policy. In this role she helped the City complete its first green buildings and worked on a range of green building initiatives, transportation alternatives, cross-agency sustainable development projects, and low-wealth community energy strategies. From the frontline, grassroots activism of Greenpeace to the US Navy to local government to philanthropy, service is a through-line in Michelle's professional journey. She has also served on nonprofit boards, in civic leadership positions, and she is currently active in numerous philanthropic affinity groups. She and her wife live in Westchester County, NY, and she has four amazing step-daughters.

**Alexis Bivens, Co-Presenter**



Ms. Alexis Bivens is currently serving as Program Director at the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation, a family foundation focused on supporting non-profit programs throughout the nation in the areas of contemporary visual art, environment and learning differences. She is responsible for grantmaking in the Foundation's environment and learning differences programs. In this role, Ms. Bivens leverages her deep experience in youth development, collective action, philanthropy, and nonprofit management. Prior to joining the Tremaine Foundation, she served as the Director of Thrive by 25 at Fairfield County's Community Foundation in addition to managing the education, environment, and arts and culture grantmaking and programs. Through this lens, Ms. Bivens worked to address the root causes and systemic challenges affecting the daily experience of opportunity youth ages 16-25. Ms. Bivens received her graduate degree from Fairfield University and her undergraduate degree from Eastern CT State University.

## **Dr. Nadine Gaab, Co-Presenter**



Dr. Nadine Gaab is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Boston Children’s Hospital Boston/Harvard Medical School and a member of the faculty at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Nadine’s work focuses on developmental cognitive neuroscience, particularly in language-based learning disabilities. Her research within the Laboratories of Cognitive Neuroscience examines the development of typical and atypical language and literacy skills in the pediatric brain as well as on pre-markers of learning disabilities and the development of screening tools for screening literacy milestones and dyslexia.

She is the 2019 recipient of the LDA Award (Learning Disabilities Association America) for her work on learning disabilities. In 2018, Nadine was presented with the Allan C. Crocker Award for her advocacy on behalf of children with dyslexia and reading disabilities and efforts around the recent passage of the Massachusetts screening legislation (under the guidance of Decoding Dyslexia MA). She has also been recognized by the International Dyslexia Association in her receipt of the Norman Geschwind Memorial lecture 2020 and the Alice H. Garside Award for outstanding leadership in advancing the science and advocacy of dyslexia. She is an international speaker, frequently presenting to teachers on the brain science of typical and atypical literacy development as well as best screening practices for early literacy milestones, dyslexia and reading impairments.

## **Carla Small, Co-Presenter**



Carla E. Small is CEO of EarlyBird Education, a tech platform providing next generation assessment and support to optimize the early stages of learning. Carla led the Digital Health Accelerator at Boston Children’s while the idea was in incubation, and recently left her role to launch EarlyBird. She says, “With a 20-minute game we can predict which children will struggle with reading – even before they learn to read – and intervene when their brains are optimized for learning. EarlyBird will transform their lives.”

As Executive Director of Innovation at Boston Children’s, Carla designed and oversaw the accelerator responsible for partnerships with large companies like Amazon and GE, as well as startup and new technology incubation – spinning out five companies with portfolio venture funding totaling over \$200 million. Prior to joining Boston Children’s, Carla founded Strategia Solutions, and before that was at strategy consulting firm Health Advances, consulting to medical device, biotechnology, pharmaceutical, diagnostic and direct-service health care providers. She also served on the Consumer Marketing Advisory Board for Medtronic Diabetes. Carla serves on the School Board of the Codman Academy Public Charter School, and has served on the advisory boards of Edwards Life Sciences and Medtronic Diabetes. She received her MBA from Harvard Business School and her Bachelor’s from Dartmouth College.

## **Jennifer Curtis-Whipple, Ed.D., Commentator**



Dr. Jennifer Curtis-Whipple is Superintendent of the Weymouth Public Schools in Weymouth, MA. Prior to assuming that role she was the Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services and Support, School Principal, Literacy Coach, and a Special Education and General Education teacher. Dr. Whipple holds an Ed.D. in Supervision and Leadership with a focus on Curriculum and Instruction from Northeastern University, and a Masters in Education from Cambridge College. She is trained in numerous literacy intervention approaches and is an adjunct professor at Curry College.